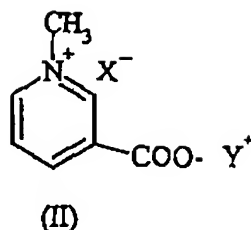
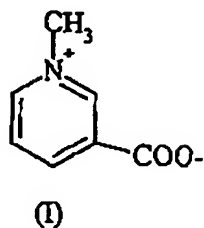


## CLAIMS

1. Use of a compound of formula (I) and/or (II)

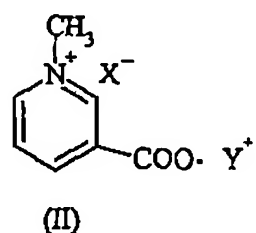
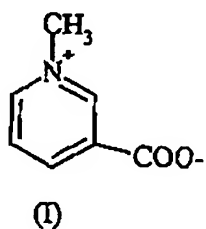


and of the salts thereof, wherein  $X^-$  and  $Y^+$  stand for any inorganic or organic, monovalent or polyvalent physiologically unobjectionable anion or cation, in an agent for repairing, strengthening and restructuring keratin-containing material and protecting such material against mechanical and chemical damage.

2. Use as defined in claim 1, characterized in that the compounds of formulas (I) and/or (II) are of synthetic or natural origin.
3. Use as defined in claim 1 and 2, characterized in that the compounds of formulas (I) and/or (II) are present as constituents of a natural plant extract.
4. Use as defined in claims 1 to 3, characterized in that the active ingredient is in its pure, betainic form or is present as a salt of the compound of formula (II).
5. Use as defined in claims 1 to 4, characterized in that  $X^-$  is selected from the group consisting of formate, tartrate, oxalate, aspartate, glutamate, acetate, citrate or of an inorganic group such as chloride, bromide, iodide, sulfate, hydrogen sulfate, phosphate, monohydrogen or dihydrogen phosphate, hydroxide, carbonate and nitrate and that  $Y^+$  is selected from the group consisting of protons, alkali metals, preferably lithium, sodium and potassium, alkaline earth metals, preferably calcium and magnesium, subgroup metals, preferably aluminum, iron, zinc, copper, manganese and silver, ammonium groups or primary, secondary, tertiary or quaternary amines, hydrazides or hydroxylammonium groups.
6. Use as defined in one of claims 1 to 5 on weakened and/or damaged keratin-containing material.
7. Use as defined in one of claims 1 to 6, characterized in that before, during or after exposure of the keratin-containing material to chemical and/or physical noxae, the agent is brought in contact with the keratin-containing material.

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8. Use as defined in claims 1 to 7 in a pretreatment agent before a chemical and/or physical treatment of keratin-containing material.
9. Use as defined in one of claims 1 to 8 for protecting or reducing damage the inner structure of keratin-containing material or for repairing (restructuring) said keratin-containing material.
10. Use as defined in one of the preceding claims 1 to 9, characterized in that the chemical treatment comprises dyeing, tinting, bleaching or permanent deformation.
11. Use as defined in one of the preceding claims 1 to 10, characterized in that the keratin-containing material consists of skin appendages.
12. Use as defined in claim 11, characterized in that the skin appendages are keratin fibers.
13. Use as defined in one of claims 1 to 12 for cosmetic treatment of sensitive, brittle and/or fine keratin fibers.
14. Use as defined in claim 12 or 13, characterized in that the keratin fibers are human hair.
15. Use as defined in one of claims 1 to 14, characterized in that the compounds of formulas (I) and/or (II) are contained in the agent in an amount from 0.001 to 30.0 weight percent, based on the total amount.
16. Use as defined in one of claims 1 to 15, characterized in that the compounds of formulas (I) and (II) are contained in the agent in an amount from 0.05 to 10.0 weight percent, based on the total amount.
17. Use as defined in one of claims 1 to 16, characterized in that the agent is in the form of an aqueous or aqueous-alcoholic solution, emulsion, foam, cream or gel.
18. Method for repairing, strengthening and restructuring keratin-containing material and for protecting such material from mechanical and chemical damage, characterized in that an agent containing a compound of formula (I) and/or (II)



and the salts thereof, wherein  $X^-$  and  $Y^+$  stand for any inorganic or organic monovalent or polyvalent physiologically unobjectionable anion and cation, or in the form of a plant extract, is brought in contact with the keratin-containing material at a temperature between 10 and 70 °C for a period of 1 to 60 minutes and is then optionally rinsed out.